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Leftist Terrorism in El Salvador

During the period October 1979 to the present, the five guerrilla groups which now comprise the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), whose actions are coordinated by an executive board called the United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU), have been responsible for thousands of violent deaths in El Salvador. Not only have they killed members of El Salvador's army and security forces, but they have carried out "executions" of peasants who cooperate with the government in land reform or who refuse to collaborate with the guerrillas. They have killed bus drivers, businessmen, civilian government officials and foreign diplomats. Juan Chacon, a leader of one of the five guerrilla groups, announced in a public statement in Managua on July 19, 1980, that his group alone had inflicted over 2,000 casualties on the government side since January 1, 1980. Each week the guerrillas carry out bombings, occupations of farms, villages and buildings, kidnappings and assassinations, as well as coordinated attacks on military outposts and patrols. Since the failure of their "final offensive" in January 1981 they have sought to destroy the country's infrastructure by bombing electrical installations, bridges and communications facilities.

The following list is a compilation of specifically attributable violent acts carried out by the left primarily against the non-combatant civilian population. It is illustrative, rather than comprehensive, but it clearly is representative of the violence that characterizes leftist subversion in El Salvador today. In cases where a specific group has claimed "credit" for the action or otherwise was identifiable the group is identified.

1979

October 16 - (One day after the coup) - Leftist members of ERP took over with machine guns the suburb of Mejicano, encouraging people to armed insurrection.

November 30 - (FPL) - San Francisco, Morazan - Justice of the Peace assassinated.

November 30 - (PRTC) - San Esteban, Catarina - Citizen shot during occupation of village.

December 6 - (FPL) - Entre Rios - Crop dusting airport attacked. Planes destroyed, watchman killed.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY R. Valas DATE 10/14/82
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
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ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

December 14 - (FPL) - Nejapa - Fifty guerrillas seize town, take hostages. Mayor assassinated.

December 14 - (FPL) - San Salvador - Businessman assassinated.

1980

January 10 - (FPL) - Chalatenango - Guerrillas take village on or about December 26, 1979 - assassinating seven.

March 26 - (ERP) - San Salvador and other locations - 40 bombs planted around country in banks and other buildings - three killed.

March 30 - (CRM) - San Salvador - Leftist disrupt funeral of Archbishop Romero by firing into crowd - 27 killed.

April 8 - (FPL) - El Carmen, Cuscatlan - Seven members of four families shot for not cooperating in subversive activities.

April 18 - (CRM) - San Salvador - Left violence associated with agrarian reform: 125 peasants killed in two weeks. Other attacks: two assassinations of agrarian reform administrators, four bombings of property, and an attack on security forces guarding one farm.

April 22 - (MLP) - San Salvador - Guatemalan Ambassador wounded in assassination attempt.

May 15 - (FPL) - San Salvador - Responsibility claimed for 23 violent acts, including assassinations, from April 26 to May 5.

June 11 - (CRM) - San Salvador - Nine Christian Democrats assassinated during one week.

June 20 - (MLP) - San Salvador - Assassination of two prominent Salvadoran businessmen.

June 24 - (FARN) - San Salvador - FARN issued a list of 215 persons which it plans to kill. List includes present and former government officials as well as private citizens.

June 25 - (FPL) - San Francisco, Morazan - ANTEL (National Telephone Company) bombed - two killed.

June 26 - (DRU) - San Salvador - Two-day general strike. Thirty-five killed, work slowed because of intimidation.

July 2 - (FPL) - Llano del Espino, Usulatan - two teachers assassinated.

July 11 - (LP-28) - San Salvador - 100 people occupy Costa Rican Embassy - guard killed.

August 7 - (RADIO CADENA) - Some 1,000 people have fled their homes in Usulutan Department due to guerrilla actions. The FMLN forces have killed some 15 members of the canton patrols.

August 13 - (PARIS AFP) - A dynamite blast destroyed the office of the mayor in Antiguo Cuscatlan 6 km. southwest of San Salvador.

August 13 - (RADIO CADENA) - Reports that some 100 men in Chaletenango Department stopped buses and kidnapped two relatives of former President Romero.

August 17 - (PARIS AFP) - Cites Archbishop Rivera as criticizing the FPL for the murder of Eduardo Guirola, an industrialist who was kidnapped by the FPL, when his family could not pay the ransom.

August 30 - (RADIO SANDINO) - Cites ERP claim of 167 operations from August 8 to 15.

September 9 - (PARIS AFP) - 60 peasants executed in San Pedro Perulapan "when they were shot by guerrillas who had held summary trials after charging the peasants with being collaborators of the government."

September 9 - (RADIO CADENA) - Reports 30 killed in cantons of Tecoluca, La Esperanza, El Rodeo, and San Francisco, in San Pedro Perulapan Department. The victims were members of the canton patrols.

September 16 - (ACAN/EFE) - ERP claims it conducted the rocket attack on the U.S. Embassy.

September 18 - (RADIO CADENA) - FDR occupies OAS office in San Salvador, holds 12 hostage.

September 20 - Extremists were reported to have tried to take over the town of Jutiapa (Cabanas) leaving twelve of the invaders and three townspeople dead.

September 23 - Guerrillas entered the town of Guazapa and attacked a restaurant where they killed the owner and stole 4,000 Colones; four guerrillas, one policeman, one watchman, one Treasury Police Inspector, and the restaurant owner were reported killed.

September 23 - News reports indicated that workers on coffee farms near Santiago de Maria (Usulutan) have been intimidated by members of guerrilla groups who have threatened the workers with death if they continue working.

September 29 - In Chalchuapa (San Miguel) a group of armed individuals sought to take over the central market to divert attention from a second group that was robbing a bank; four people died in the incident.

October 2 - Armed men entered Canton Ajilico, set fire to twelve houses and killed one townsman.

October 4 - A thirteen year old girl was killed in Canton Carolina, Jutiapa (Cabanas) during an attack by guerrillas on the houses of the Cantonal Commander and of a member of the local militia.

October 9 - (San Salvador RADIO CADENA) - FPL takes credit for the kidnapping and execution of South African Ambassador Archibald Dunn.

October 10 - (San Salvador DIARIO DE HOY) - FPL claims the right not to release Ambassador Dunn's body.

October 10 - (San Salvador RADIO CADENA SONORA) - Elements who identified themselves as members of the FPL assassinated Melvin Rigoberto Orellana, secretary of the Executive Committee of the Salvadoran Christian Democratic Party (PDC).

October 14 - A group dressed in olive drab and with their faces covered assaulted a bus near Canton Cuchillas, Santiago and Texacuangos (San Salvador) and killed both the driver and the fare collector.

October 14 - A group of guerrillas killed a resident of Canton La Herradura (La Paz) in addition to pillaging and vandalizing the town.

October 15 - A guerrilla group ambushed a bus near Sonsonate setting it afire after forcing the passengers off the bus and robbing them.

October 16 - Guerrillas killed three people and injured five others during a raid against the Hacienda La Canoa near Jiquilisco (Usulutan).

October 19 - (AP) - FARN claims responsibility for bombs that rocked the city during the previous night.

October 19 - Guerrillas invaded Canton El Paraiso (San Vicente), killing one resident and damaging several houses.

October 20 - The Police Chief of Ahuachapan was killed by a group that attacked his car on the road between Santa Ana and San Salvador.

October 21 - (San Salvador EL MUNDO) - FMLN claims credit for sabotage against electrical transmission lines, attacks on military posts and other terrorist activities.

October 21 - In San Miguel a group reported to be guerrillas entered the house of a miller, forced him and his family outside, set fire to their house and then killed the miller.

October 21 - Near Armenia (Sonsonate) three men were found dead with notices claiming they were executed for treason to the FPL (Popular Forces of Liberation).

October 22 - The Mayor of San Isidro (Chalatenango) was found dead; he had been kidnapped four days earlier by a heavily armed group.

October 26 - Guerrillas machine-gunned a bus in Chalatenango, causing the deaths of two people and injuring seven others.

October 28 - (Buenos Aires LATIN) - The army has reported that fifty persons, relatives of members of the rural military patrol, have been killed in the past few hours in the rural areas of the country.

October 28 - A group of about fifteen guerrillas took over Canton Sitio Viejo near Ilobasco (Cabanas) and killed sixteen residents, many of them members of the town's civilian militia.

October 30 - (San Salvador, RADIO CADENA CENTRAL) - Heavily armed men stopped a train in El Cedral, robbed the passengers, and set fire to engine, and one car.

October 31 - (San Salvador API) - FMLN announces that guerrilla forces will be sabotaging all public transportation vehicles circulating in San Salvador and in the rest of the country.

October 31 - A group of nine road workers and watchmen were killed by guerrillas near Las Viboras on the road to Suchitoto (Cuscatlan).

November 3 - The manager of the International Fair, Manuel Rivas Rodriguez, was assassinated in San Salvador by a group which included two women. Rivas' wife died later from wounds suffered in the incident. The Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) claimed responsibility for the assassinations.

November 4 - (Managua RADIO SANDINO) - FMLN claims credit for the attack which killed Manuel Rivas Rodriguez, manager of the Ninth International Fair, his wife, and an unnamed manager of the Nacional Financiera Bank.

November 6 - The owner of Muebles Imperio, Gerardo Castro Linares, was assassinated and two relatives injured as the three drove along a San Salvador street. The assassination of Castro as well as the destruction of his business were carried out because of his refusal to end his participation in the International Fair.

November 7 - (Washington Post) - 75 leftists launched the latest attack in Santa Ana in which eight persons died including one nine year old boy and two adults who were killed by a rocket that hit their house.

November 7 - Dr. Efrain Jovel, the Legal Advisor to the Green Cross and a former Juvenile Court Judge, was assassinated in his car in San Salvador. A sign accusing Jovel of being an enemy of the working class and signed by the FPL (Popular Liberation Forces) was reported to have been found at the scene.

November 11 - FPL members entered the offices of the Mayor of Sacacoyo (La Libertad) and, on not finding the Mayor, opted to kidnap his eighteen year old assistant.

November 14 - According to Monsignor Rivera y Damas, a group of guerrillas entered the town of San Esteban Catarina (San Vicente), kidnapped a group of farmers and killed them.

November 16 - One woman was killed and two children injured when a truck carrying members of the Civil Defense Committee for San Cayetano Istepeque (San Vicente) was attacked.

November 16 - Colonel Carlos Choto, his wife and two children were burned to death inside their house in San Salvador suburb after a group of about twenty guerrillas, among them several women, attacked their house with weapons and fire and incendiary bombs.

November 18 - Guerrillas fired and hurled bombs at a bus travelling near Sensunteqeque (Cabanas) killing one passenger and injuring two others.

December 1 - A bus travelling from San Salvador to Suchitoto was assaulted by guerrillas who robbed the driver and then shot him. The guerrillas left pamphlets claiming that there would be other acts in vengeance for the killings of the FDR leaders on November 27.

December 9 - In San Salvador Dr. Victor Manuel Moreno, ex-President of INPEP, was abducted by a group of armed men while leaving his house. The newspaper Diario del Mundo received a telephone call attributing the action to the Central Guerrilla Command.

December 12 - In San Salvador two British citizens were attacked by unknown gunmen on the street. One of the British subjects was wounded.

1981

January 12 - South African reporter Ian Mates was killed and two Americans were wounded when their car struck a leftist land mine near Aguilares, north of the capital.

January 31 - A bomb was rolled down a corridor of the Apopa (San Salvador) City Hall; the subsequent explosion injured three municipal police and damaged the building.

February 20 - A group of terrorists fleeing from a failed attempt to destroy an electrical installation entered the Tinetti Market, killed one vendor and injured several others.

February 27 - At least five people were killed when a bomb exploded at the Ministry of Labor in San Salvador.

March 1 - A truck carrying water to Suchitoto (Cuscatlan) was attacked by guerrillas; the driver of the truck was killed in the incident.

March 15 - FMLN members reportedly took over the Ana Guerra de Jesus neighborhood in San Vicente and held a meeting during which they warned residents that they would be executed if they did not participate in a takeover of San Vicente planned for the end of the month.

March 17 - Guerrillas machinegunned a small truck near Tecapan (Usulutan), killing the driver.

March 23 - Guerrillas dressed in olive drab were engaged in stopping buses near San Lorenzo and San Esteban Catarina (San Vicente). They exacted "voluntary contributions" from the passengers and kidnapped a National Guardsman who was on board one bus.

March 25 - Six people were injured when a bomb exploded in a Santa Ana roller skating rink.

March 25 - Guerrillas attacked a group of peasants working near Canton Coyolito (Cuscatlan). One soldier defending the peasants was injured.

March 26 - A car containing bombs and arms in addition to three people exploded on a San Salvador street, killing the three plus a fourth man who was riding past on a motorcycle.

March 27 - A powerful car bomb exploded in the San Benito section of San Salvador killing two women who were waiting for a bus and injuring several others. Reportedly the bomb was intended to kill JRG President Duarte, whose car was soon to pass that point.

March 28 - Guerrillas dressed in olive drab were engaged in stopping and robbing the occupants of vehicles on the coast ("Litoral") highway near Tepecoyo (La Paz).

March 30 - Guerrillas exploded a bomb on a road near Sensuntepeque (Cabanas) and then machinegunned a truck, killing one fourteen year old.

March 30 - Guerrillas entered the town of Nuevo Eden de San Juan (San Miguel) and shot the postmaster.

April 6 - A bomb exploded at the home of a Justice of the Supreme Court, Rafael Rodriguez.

April 8 - Guerrillas killed the owner and injured the driver of a fuel tanker truck near La Riena (Chalatenango).

April 11 - Two people were injured when terrorist blew up the Astor Theater.

April 12 - Guerrillas took Caserio Guarnesia near Texistepeque (Santa Ana) and shot one resident who refused to cooperate in giving them food and funds.

April 12 - Guerrillas reportedly attacked a civil defense patrol in Canton El Chile, San Juan Nonualco (La Paz) and killed five patrol members.

April 12 - Guerrillas reportedly killed two members of the civil defense group in Canton La Esperanza (San Vicente).

April 27 - The clandestine Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) today claimed responsibility for the deaths of nine civilian patrol members, the destruction of the communications office and the garrison and the occupation of the Village of Nuevo Eden de San Juan, east of San Salvador.

April 28 - Guerrillas invaded Canton Potrero Batres, San Isidro (Cabanas) killed three inhabitants and injured three others.

April 28 - Guerrillas assassinate Dr. Carlos Alberto Hidalgo, President of National Lottery and labor leader. Guerrillas stopped his car and shot him four times in chest.

April 29 - Carlos Hidalgo Cuellar, the President of the National Lottery, was assassinated in Mejicanos (San Salvador). The FPL claimed responsibility for the crime, justifying it on the basis that Hidalgo was a dissident Marxist.

April 29 - A Treasury Police (PH) post guarding an electrical substation in Soyapango (San Salvador) was attacked by guerrillas. The interpreter for a U.S. journalist who decided to enter the fray was killed; the journalist and a Salvadoran colleague were injured.

April 29 - Machine gun toting assailants stole a taxi from its driver near the San Salvador Civic Center. The driver called for assistance from nearby colleagues; their pursuit ended when the assailant machine gunned them, killing one.

April 29 - Guerrillas engaged stopping and robbing motorist on the road to Verapaz (San Vicente), shot and killed one victim who refused to cooperate.

April 30 - Assailants set fire to the Prensa Grafica newspaper distributorship in Santa Ana. Two people (including one arsonist) suffered gasoline burns and one man was shot by the departing visitors.

April 30 - A San Salvador supermarket was bombed.

April 30 - One member of the Civil Defense Committee in Canton El Chile, Zacatecoluca was killed by a group of guerrilla attackers.

May 1 - Seven people were killed and four injured by a terrorist bomb explosion on the road linking Cinquera (Cuscatlan) and Suchitoto (Cabanas). The dead and injured were part of a group which had refused to join the guerrillas.

May 3 - Jose Ernesto Medrano, son of retired General Jose Medrano, was gunned down by leftist terrorist as he was entering a Baptist Church in San Salvador.

May 3 - Two people were killed when guerrillas attacked a group of farm workers on the Guajoyo Hacienda in San Vicente.

May 5 - A 73-year old lawyer, Jose Valentin Jaimes, was shot to death by hooded men in his office in San Salvador. He was a former judge and legal adviser of the security forces.

May 5 - Antonio Fausto Nativi, Justice of the Peace of San Jorge, was shot to death while at home with his family. A group comprised of about 15 or 20 hooded and heavily armed men arrived in his house demandin that Nativi give them his weapons and cash.

May 6 - One bomb exploded inside a car near the University of El Salvador and killed three people, two of whom have been identified.

May 6 - Three people were wounded in a shootout and a bomb explosion in Independiente Avenue in San Salvador.

May 7 - Individuals in a taxi shot to death Hector Manuel Tovar Duque, a 36-year old bus driver, in front of the San Salvador maternity hospital.

May 7 - In Santa Ana, 24-year old businesswoman Maria Luisa Quintana was shot to death while alone at home.

May 7 - Guerrillas assassinated two peasants and injured three others in Canton El Paraiso near Jiquilisco (Usulutan).

May 8 - Carlos Roberto Martinez Guerra was shot to death near Santa Elena after being taken off a bus on the road to Jucuapa by several unidentified men.

May 8 - Five individuals who identified themselves as members of a subversive organization killed Ignacio Fuentes, Mayor of Dulce Nombre de Maria, in Chalatenango.

May 10 - FMLN guerrillas occupied San Emilio Canton in Tecoluca and held a meeting to ask the townspeople to join their ranks. Afterwards, they kidnapped two members of the town's Civil Defense Force from their homes.

May 11 - The body of Carl[illegible] Barrientos, a well-known Santa Ana businessman, was foun[illegible] 3 days after his kidnapping.

May 11 - Several youths were hanged by terrorists in San Jose, Las Flores, Chalatenango.

May 12 - Guerrillas stopped a bus near San Sebastian (San Vicente), robbed the passengers, and kidnapped one lady bus rider.

May 13 - Leftist Farbundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas continue harassing the Salvadoran Civil Defense members in different places.

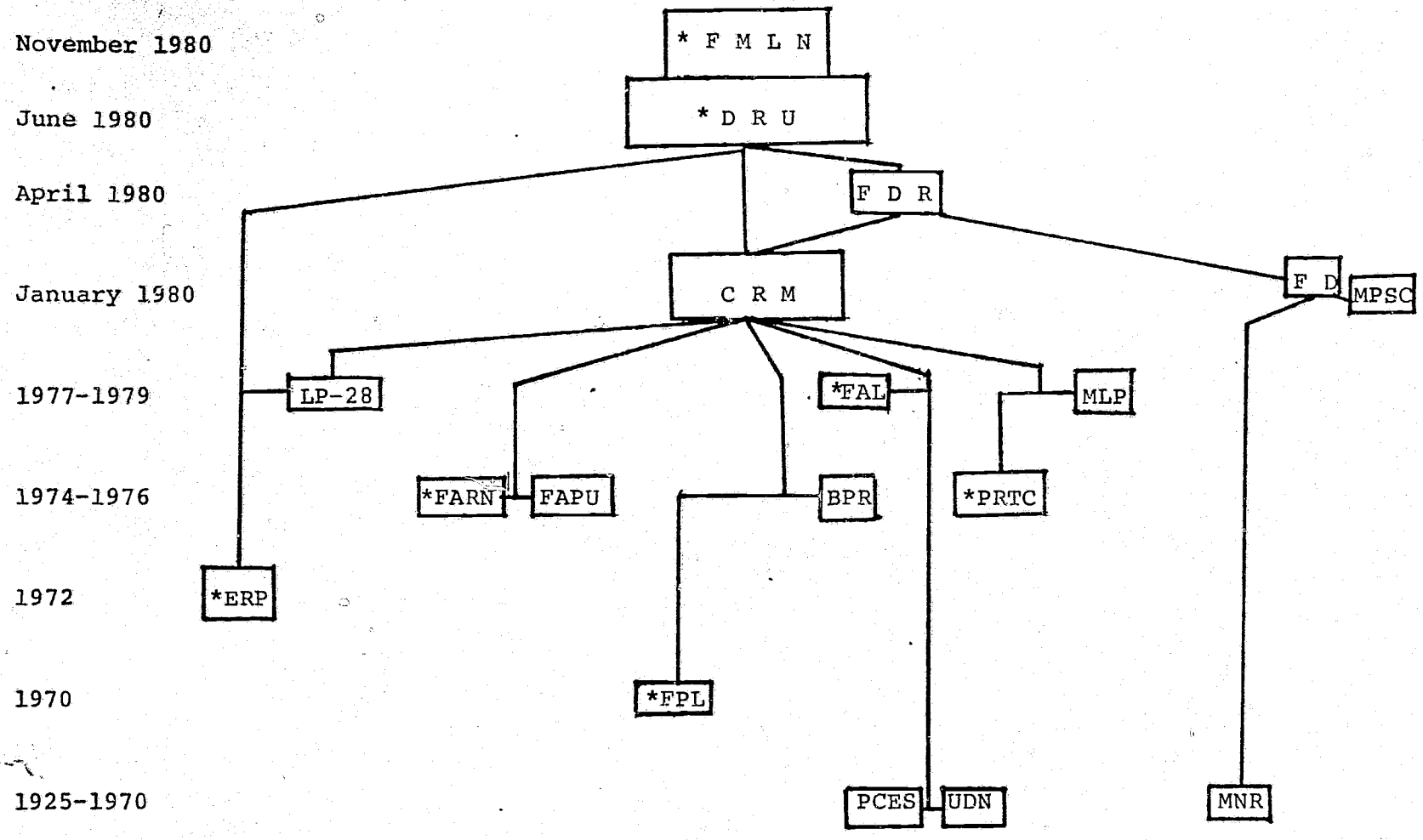
May 13 - In a Villa Victoria town, a group of civilian patrolmen who were patrolling the area clashed with guerrillas from nearby camps. In the clash, one woman who assisted the patrolmen was seriously wounded and four patrolmen were killed.

May 13 - In Verapaz, San Vicente, the Civil Defense Headquarters was attacked by the guerrillas and two patrolmen were killed.

May 14 - Elvira Guadalupe Campos Guerra, a social worker, was kidnapped by unidentified persons who forcibly removed her from her place of work in the Atlacatl neighborhood. The victim is the sister of Col. Napoleon Armando Guerra, who is Salvadoran Ambassador to Israel.

May 21, 1981

DEVELOPMENT OF LEFTIST GROUPS IN EL SALVADOR



* Armed guerrilla terrorist groups

LEFTIST GROUPS IN EL SALVADOR

1. A. PCES - The Communist Party of El Salvador is the oldest organization of the far left and has historically been oriented toward Moscow. It has recently abandoned its former attitude toward violent revolution and now espouses armed action against the JRG.

B. UDN - The National Democratic Union is the political front group for the PCES and has a variety of component organizations such as labor unions and urban poor.

2. A. FPL - The Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces is the largest terrorist/guerrilla group and professes a revolutionary Marxist creed. Its leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, was a member of the PCES before breaking with the orthodox party and helping form the FPL. The FPL claims to be developing a revolutionary arm to defeat the JRG.

B. BPR - The Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the front group of the FPL, is a large coalition of peasant, worker, student, teacher, etc., groups. It has been responsible for numerous strikes, occupations of buildings, marches, etc.

3. A. ERP - The Popular Revolutionary Army is a terrorist/guerrilla group organized in the early 1970's by dissatisfied members of the PCES. It has been particularly active in bombings and kidnappings.

B. LP-28 - The 28 February Popular Leagues, the front group for the ERP, is a modest-sized coalition of students, teachers, and peasants.

4. A. FARN - The Armed Forces of National Resistence is a terrorist/guerrilla group which was formed in the mid-1970's by a splinter group of the ERP.

B. FAPU - The United Popular Action Front, the front group for the FARN, consists of several student, farmworker, and urban slumdweller organizations.

5. A. PRTC - The Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers is a small terrorist/guerrilla group organized in the mid-1970's.

B. MLP - The Movement of Popular Liberation, the front group for the PRTC, is headed by Fabio Castillo.

6. MNR - The National Revolutionary Movement is a small Social Democratic oriented party headed by former JRG Junta member Guillermo Ungo, who is also President of the FDR.

7. FAL - The guerrilla arm of the PCES, formed in 1979 when the communist party decided to engage in armed subversion and terrorism.

8. MPSC - The Popular Social Christian Movement was formed in March 1980 by dissident Christian Democrats and is headed by Ruben Zamora Rivas.

9. FD - The Democratic Front was a coalition of left-of-center parties, the MNR and MPSC, as well as professional and labor groups formed in early April 1980.

10. FDR - The Revolutionary Democratic Front is a coalition of the CRM and the FD formed in mid-April 1980. It is now headed by Guillermo Ungo and is controlled by the DRU.

11. CRM - The Revolutionary Coordinator of the Masses was the umbrella group for leftist organizations which was formed in January 1980.

12. DRU - The Unified Revolutionary Directorate is the recently formed control board for all leftist organizations. It comprises the leadership of the principal terrorist/guerrilla groups, the PCES, the FPL, the ERP, and the FARN. The DRU has declared that it will guide the revolution. It has superseded the CRM. The FDR is not represented on the DRU.

13. FMLN - The Farabundo Marti Peoples Liberation Front is the coordinating board of the guerrilla organizations comprised of the ERP, FPL, PCES, PRTC and FARN. Its orientation is radical Marxist. It is controlled by the DRU.

Department of State

May 21, 1981